

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY Rumania

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SUBJECT Leather Shortage

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Leather material for shoes is reportedly in great demand throughout Rumania. Shoemakers who continue to maintain their own businesses are compelled to acquire such material from the black market. According to informant, leather sold on the black market is either stolen from Government warehouses and state-operated shops or is placed on sale by soldiers who sell their ration of soles. A Rumanian moccasin-type shoe called opinca, which sold for 20 to 30 new lei on the market, was also being used as leather for soles. The black market also had leather which had been secretly tanned by peasants or farmers who had illegally slaughtered their stock. Such leather, although of poor quality, was greatly in demand. The official price of leather soles before the monetary reform was 480 lei, whereas the black market price was 1,700 lei to 1,800 lei. A square foot of leather for shoes sold for 1,200 old lei to 1,300 old lei on the black market.

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